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ETHNIC CHUCKLE

Dorohaya Tyotya Maria,

Yak tam kolo vas? Toot shitko going barz dobri. No yah mala taki experience zhe yah bula taka embarrassed – yah tak hymblusha even to think about it.

Me stari ee yah bulli invited doh takee fancy reception for Novi Ruck. Tam budyut takee very important luydi. Yah peeshlah doh storyu kupete novi outfit. Shitko bullo chornoh ee cherveno. Yah uzhe mala chorni shosee noh yah dumam – what the heck, live it up a little – go with it. Yah kupela cherveni shosee ee chervenee stockensee.

Shosee malee high heels ah yah uzhe dulhe time neh noseela high heels. Nohyah decided that yah will give them a try. Me peeshleh for cocktail hour. Toh yeh takee Amerekansky obechey where yest bara eh napitke noh neh dey sistee. Me stoyale ee balakalee ee moye shosee feelig tighter ee tighter. Moyee nohi tak bolleli zhe dumam zhe yak szrazuyu.

Ah presnol time to go doh dining roomah. Me nashlee nash table. Yah plopped down yah didn't care zhe druhee shest people yestyeh neh preshli. Kolee ohnee presshlee me vedelee zhe me yeh neh znalee. Noh musica bulla taka loud zhe me neh mohli talking anyway. Yah bulla taka dyachna zhe yah mohla seedeti. Noh yah yestyeh did not get relief. Me nohi trobbing. Yah neh mohla standing it anymore ee yah took me shosee off. Yah almost a aohnewla in relief.

Dinner peshlo OK. Yah wiggling me toes ee yah happy. Kolee programma kenshela yah feeling around for me shoes with my noha. Then yah panikovala boh yah neh mohla eeh nyteh. Yah neh hotcheelah kickovatee

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EPIPHANY

The sixth of January is the feast of the **Epiphany.** Originally it was the one Christian feast of the "shining forth" of God to the world in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth. It included the celebration of Christ's birth, the adoration of the Wisemen, and all of the childhood events of Christ such as His circumcision and presentation to the temple as well as his baptism by John in the Jordan. There seems to be little doubt that this feast, like Easter and Pentecost, was understood as the fulfillment of a previous Jewish festival, in this case, the **Feast of Lights**.

Epiphany means **shining forth** or **manifestation**. The feast is often called, as it is in the Orthodox service books, **Theophany**, which means the shining forth and manifestation of **God**. The emphasis in the present-day celebration is on the appearance of Jesus as the human Messiah of Israel and the divine Son of God, One of the Holy Trinity with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Thus, in the baptism by John in the Jordan, Jesus identifies himself with sinners as the **"Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)**, the "Beloved" of the Father whose messianic task it is to redeem men from their sins (Luke 3:21, Mark 1:35). And he is revealed as well as One of the Divine Trinity, testified to by the voice of the Father, and by the Spirit in the form of a dove. This is the central **epiphany** glorified in the main hymns of the feast:

When Thou, O Lord wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest! For the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee, calling Thee his

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SOBORNOST

One Faith, One Voice

In Orthodox teaching, no particular bishop can be the sole repository of ecclesiastical authority, or therefore claim to employ in his person the supreme authority of the Church. For the supreme authority in the whole Church is the meeting of its bishops in council. As the organ for the formulation and clarification of the truth of the Gospel, the council defines infallibly, in the power of the Holy Spirit, but it introduces no new elements into the deposit of divine revelation handed down by the apostles. The council merely interprets this deposit and defines it in a reliable and inerrant way.

The purpose of the council is, in the words of Vince of Lerins, to establish the truth which is found in the Bible and Tradition and which constitutes the mind and conscience of all living members of the church. When this truth is challenged or distorted, it needs to be stated as clearly as possible so that "the doctrines of the heavenly philosophy 'acquire' clarity, convincing force and precision", without on the other hand being "changed, distorted and twisted", but "retaining their integrity, purity and true and proper significance." Thus, St. Vincent explains:

> ...that which previously was quite simply believed will be judged more comprehensibly and that which was previously accepted by the elders simply on the strength of Tradition will subsequently be sealed in written documents for those who will succeed us.

When the council satisfies this condition faithfully and in the fear of

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CHRONOLOGY

JANUARY 2008

THREE MIRACULOUS ICONS precious in the Carpathians have been replicated and are venerated at the SS. Cyril and Methodious Church at Camp Nazareth. They are the icons of the Virgin of Klukochov, the Virgin of Mariapoch and the Virgin of Krasnyj Brod.

HIERARCHS OF SCOBA (THE STANDING CONFERENCE OF CANONICAL ORTHODOX BISHOPS IN THE AMERICAS) AND OF SCOOCH (THE STANDING CONFERENCE OF ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES) celebrated the 7th Annual Prayer Service for the United Nations. Many diplomats from many countries attended.

IN A NEW STUDY BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN it was found that examined genes of indigenous people from North to South America and from two Siberian groups show that one unique genetic variant is widespread suggesting that all Native Americans are descended from a single group. This bolsters claims that Native Americans are descended from one migrant group that crossed a lost land link from modern Siberia to Alaska.

BABA KNEW BEST. A teaspoon of honey before bedtime seems to calm children's coughs and helps them sleep better than did a dose of cough medicine. Federal health advisors have recently warned that over-the-counter cough and cold medications should be used with care.

DIED, Fr. Dimitry Grigorieff in Washington, D.C.

TALES FROM SLOVAK CASTLES by Lucille King and Sylvia Lorine, complete with maps of Slovakia, tells 15 stories that surround 15 castles in Slovakia. Slovakia has over 200 castles. The book can be purchased for $11.95. Call 877 892-8900 for further info.

THE WORLD PREMIER of the "Christmas Oratorio" composed by the Russian Orthodox Bishop of Vienna and Austria, Hilarion (Alfeyev) took place in Washington, D.C. The libretto uses Orthodox liturgical texts from the feasts of the Annunciation, the Nativity, and the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple. The "Oratorio" was performed by the Central Symphony Orchestra of the Russian Ministry of Defense, the Youth Choir of the Musical College of the Moscow Conservatory, and the Choir of the National Tretyakov Art Gallery, under the direction of Maestro (Major-General) Valerie Kalikow, one of the foremost conductors of Russia.

THE NEXT MEETING of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation will be held at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA on June 2-4. The Consultation was established in 1965 and has issued 22 agreed upon statements on various topics. The topic presently under discussion is "Church Structures."

MANY PARISHES SPONSOR "THE SOUPER BOWL OF CARING" in January. Parishioners are asked to give $1 and one canned good to help hungry people. Many youth groups are participating. For info 1-877-803-4622.

CHRISTIAN CHURCHES TOGETHER IN THE USA (CCT) began in 2001 as the most inclusive fellowship of Christian Churches and traditions in the USA. Among its participants are Evangelical/Pentecostal, Orthodox, Catholic, historic Protestant, and Racial/Ethnic churches. The Athiochian Archdiocese joined the 35 member organization in February. The organization is studying poverty at this time.

THE COMPLETE ORTHODOX STUDY BIBLE: THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS will be available early in 2008. It was begun in 1999.

ON SANCTITY OF LIFE SUNDAY one parish emphasized the day by having young children of the parish hold candles while they were lined up in the central aisle. This was done during the reading of the gospel.

CHRISTMAS HYMNS IN CHURCH SLAVONIC sung by the Greek Catholic Seminarians of Mukachevo can be purchased from Eastern Catholic Publications. For info call 703-691-8862 or online at www.ecpubs.com

THE ANTIOCHIAN ARCHDIOCESE now has seven camps. The goal is to have them all accredited by the American Camp Association.

ALL WESTERN RITE PARISHES IN Orthodox jurisdictions celebrate Holy Pascha with the entire Orthodox world.

THE RECOGNITION OF KOSOVO as an independent state would have disastrous consequences, according to Metropolitan Kiril of Smolensk. Kosovo is currently controlled by people of Albanian origin whose ancestors apostatized from Christianity during Ottoman times. He said: "Even now, in the presence of international forces in Kosovo, the shrines continue to be desecrated, and churches and monasteries of great cultural significance destroyed. If this happens regardless of the presence of armed forces, that are able to protect the Serbian cultural heritage and the Orthodox people, what would happen after these forces leave the country and Kosovo becomes independent? I am afraid that the consequences would be tragic."

(Continued from front page)
ETHNIC CHUCKLE

one of the strangers feet noh yah musheela neighti me shosee. Oden chelovek mah takee funny look nah face. Ohn hladah nah meney, bend down, eeh brought out me chervenee shosee. Then ohn held them up in the air asking who lost a pair of sexy shoes or were they a door prize from Wal-Marts? Yah dumam zhe yah z'dohnuh. Shitkee started to laugh. Yah neznala what to do.

Me standing up, noh chekali for everyone to go. Yah dostala me shoose back noh yah couln't put them on boh moyi nohee tak spuhle. Yah mohla put me toes in me shoes ee yah limped out of the room. Yah dumam zhe from now on yah budyu noseeti me sensible one inch heel shoes. Yah zah stara for high heels.

Budte Zdravi
Not so fashionable
Hanya

(Continued from front page)
SOBORNOST

God, it will, within the limits of its jurisdiction, appear an infallible instrument in the formulation and clarification of divine Truth. The Ecumenical Councils, in particular, thus constitute the supreme external authority in the Church, that which interprets and defines the truth of the faith with the help of God.

The opinion and faith of the Fathers and the Church in its synods confirms this position. Ever since Nicea I, this view gained acceptance and was officially proclaimed in the letter of Emperor Constantine:

> What was pleasing to the 318 bishops is no other than the decision of God, especially that of the Holy Spirit, present in the minds of so many men of such quality, caused the divine will to shine forth.

The church historian Socrates notes the same thing of the Nicene bishops, who although simple men "were in no way able to separate themselves from the truth because they were enlightened by God and the grace of the Holy Spirit." Other Church Fathers reasoned in the same way, whether to accept the decisions as "truly formulated by the Holy Spirit", or as "spiritual decrees" and *haereditaria signacula* which no one dare to contravene.

St. Basil urges acceptance of the faith expounded at Nicea and warns against breaking "even the least of its words" for "the 318 met together without a quarrelsome spirit and their decisions were not made without the operation of the Holy Spirit."

Fr. Michael Dahulich, PhD
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WINTER'S GRACE

Loud creaking and snapping broke the stillness of the icy morning. Freezing rain had silenced every manmade noisemaker. Power lines were down, homes and businesses had no electricity. Roads were impassable, keeping thousands from daily routines. Children were not able to get to school. Nature was calling attention to herself, and she got it. As the sun rose, her stunning beauty was indescribable, her destructive power undeniable.

Ice glistened like precious crystal against a brilliant blue sky. But the ice that made the branches sparkle in the sunlight also weighed them down, causing them to break under the burden.

The same can happen to those who have glittering lives. They call attention to themselves with stunning beauty, talent or intelligence. They are charismatic. People notice them and admire them and envy them. But too often eventually the weight of pride causes them to crack and break. The reality is that they have forgotten that God alone is worthy of all praise.

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He that can reply calmly to an angry man is too hard for him.

FOUR ELEMENTS

The modern day scientist teaches that everything is made up of molecules and atoms, and that they are made from other particles, and so on. I have never seen any of these but I accept that they may well exist by having faith that all the scientists together would not lie. Also, I know that I could study for many years to verify these findings, starting with the first principle in mathematics and up to the most recent discoveries in physics.

But I know with a far greater faith which is infallible that everything is fundamentally made up of earth, water, wind and fire, because they are mentioned in our Orthodox service books. ~~For~~ example, while celebrating our Saviour's Baptism we

> seeing Thee stripped naked, with fear Jordan said to Him Who had been born of a barren womb: 'Suffer the Lord, Who cleanses the whole creation by fire and Spirit, to be baptized, O John. For behold, for this cause He has come to sanctify the elements of earth and water,'

and at the great blessing of the waters: "Of four elements hast Thou compounded the creation."

You see, the scientists look at the world through material eyes, but we Orthodox primarily see through spiritual eyes. Henceforth, we see that the facts that everything is made from the four elements and also probably from atoms are not contradictory, but are in harmony. And of course, as the four elements are primarily spiritual (with physical manifestations) the study that could be done to verify these things is also spiritual.

Fr. S.

A LIGHTER MOMENT

A man was driving with his wife at his side and his mother-in-law in the back seat. The women just wouldn't leave him alone. "You're driving too fast!" his mother-in-law said. "Stay more to the left" his wife said. After a few more mixed orders, the man turned to his wife and asked: Who's driving this car, you or your mother?"

(Continued from front page)

EPIPHANY

Beloved Son. And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of his Word. O Christ our God, who hast revealed Thyself and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee. (Troparion of the Feast)

Today Thou hast appeared to the universe, and Thy Light, O Lord, has shone on us, who with understanding praise Thee: Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, O Light Unapproachable! (Kontakion of the Feast)

(From 'The Orthodox Church: Doctrine' by Fr. Thomas Hopko. Used by permission)

The blessing of water and the homes of parishioners during the festal period of Epiphany is an ancient and cherished custom in the Orthodox Church, dating back to the earliest centuries. The blessing of homes is an invocative blessing, one that may be repeated just as a blessing received from a priest or bishop may be repeated. Spiritually, the annual home blessing signifies a renewal of grace. Practically, it provides an opportunity for a visit from the pastor.

The customary preparation for having your home blessed is to have a candle, bowl, Holy Water (if you don't have the newly blessed water yet, the priest will usually have some), and an icon or cross on a table covered appropriately with a clean cloth. You are encouraged to have a list of the baptismal names of all members of the family and everyone that you would like to have commemorated during the service. Everyone who is at home should participate in the blessing. Please turn off the TV, radio, stereo, etc. as this is a service of the Church. A member of the family, holding a candle should lead the priest through the house.

Fr. Vladimir Lecko

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He that listens for what people say of him shall never have peace.

WITH WATER

One of the Orthodox Church's liturgical practices at this time of the year is the great blessing of water on the feast day of Epiphany, which commemorates the Baptism of Our Lord in the water of the River Jordan.

That Baptism marks the beginning of Christ's public ministry. In the Torah of the Old Testament, water is used in ceremonies of cleansing and purification. It was used to ordain priests and to purify the sons of Aaron before they entered the temple.

It is no wonder that in the beginning of the New Testament we read of St. John the Baptist preaching the message of repentance and renewal, and calling upon his listeners to make an outward act that would symbolize this. He asked them to be baptized in the river Jordan in which he also baptized Christ.

Water, then, through the action of Christ at His Baptism, has become a vehicle for the sanctification of man. A few marketers have recently seized on this universal symbol of purity for financial gain. They are cleverly packaging "HOLY WATER" and making all kinds of claims for it. Some companies have an Angelican or Roman Catholic priest bless the water while it is still in the warehouse.

Of course, there is nothing magical or superstitious to be attributed to blessed water. It is bound up with our faith in Jesus Christ and becomes meaningful and potent for our salvation.

As we think of the baptism of our Lord on this feastday, it is only natural that we come to think of our own birth into the family of God. Inasmuch as we are usually baptized as infants and cannot therefore recall the day, it behooves us to think of this event at least each time the holy day of the Theophany is observed.

True, we are not only baptized with water but with the Holy Spirit as well. And this is precisely where our thought must lie.

This is a great privilege. We are members of Christ's Church; we are, indeed, the Body of Christ. We are the Chosen People.

But it is also great responsibility. Christ entrusted His Church, His teaching, His work, His love into our hands. If the world is going to feel the impact of Christ on it, if the work of reconciliation and sanctification is to come to full fruition, we must do our share for we are in the world to transform it.

DWELLER IN THE DESERT

The Desert Fathers tell a story about some robbers who entered a monastery and said to one of the monks, "Give us everything you have." The monk did not resist. The robbers took everything they could find in the room and then departed. They didn't get far before the old monk came running after them. The old monk had discovered something they had left behind and said, "here, my children, take this as well, for material possessions mean nothing to me." Amazed by this, the robbers returned everything they had taken and repented saying, "Truly, this is a man of God!"

On January 17th we celebrate the feast of Saint Anthony the Great, another "man of God" who gave away all his possessions. He was born into nobility and wealth in Egypt in the third century but upon the death of his parents, gave away all his possession to the poor. Often referred to as the Father of Monasticism, he withdrew to the desert to live the life of a monk for the next 85 years.

Although he had no formal education, he was revered as a teacher of teachers and counselor of counselors. On one occasion, some philosophers challenged him on his lack of credentials. Anthony replied, "Which is better: good sense or book learning?" The shamed philosophers realized that they had only book learning, while Anthony had real understanding.

Saint Anthony died at the age of 105 around the year 356. His teachings and way of life are still revered today.

Memories

50 YEARS AGO – JANUARY 1958

Gleaned from The Orthodox Herald of 50 years ago, I found that the issue had articles dealing with the Nativity of Christ/Christmas for it would be some years in the future that the church would change from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar and the celebration of Christmas to December.

Peter Melnyk was proposing a pilgrimage to Alaska. Pilgrimages are now made every year in August to visit the area where St. Herman worked as a missionary.

A printing press was installed at St. Tikhon's Seminary in the building known as "The butka" which was directly behind the old seminary building.

Alumni held a special service marking the 20th anniversary of the opening of St. Tikhon Seminary.

We announced that in the coming issue we would start a Bible Reading Schedule. We've completed 50 years of encouraging the reading of Scripture.

It was very difficult to find Orthodox religious articles in 1958. Protodeacon Kiryk filled the need with his shop at the Cathedral on Second Street.

The Metropolitan Council Sunday School Committee published Orthodox Sunday School material with the guidance and help of Fr. Joseph Pishtey, Sr.

PARISH RESOLUTIONS

A Christian parish should continually evaluate its activities and programs to see if it is guiding the parish and the faithful to its true goals.

St. Paul states that the goal which a parish undertakes are "...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ..." (Ephesians 4:13)

Many parishes do exactly this at the beginning of the year, when they plan their activities for the whole year. As they look to the coming year, the parish ought to make the spiritual goals its guideposts.

DECLARING WAR

Do you realize that at every baptism that is performed, a real war has been declared on Satan? The candidate for baptism is called "a newly-chosen warrior of Christ our God." At the entrance of the church, in view of the public assembly of believers, he or she is asked three times: "Do you renounce Satan and all his works, and all his angels, and all his service, and all his pride?" And three times: "Have you renounced Satan?" To add to the seriousness of the renunciation the candidate is asked to "breathe and spit on him." This act shows total contempt for the devil and his legions. A declaration of war has been issued.

Desiring to be placed in the service of God, and having pledged the renunciation of a past life of sin, the candidate (or his or her witness) then responds to the priest's thrice-repeated question: "Do you unite yourself to Christ?" And again three times: "Have you united yourself to Christ?" In all, the candidate must give an affirmative reply 12 times, emphasizing their willingness and unwavering desire to be joined to Christ.

Many times godparents are chosen who give lip service to these vows and do not understand the gravity of the spiritual combat ahead. If we have "renounced Satan, and all his works and all his pride," we must struggle not to give in to the spirit of this world, but to focus on "the one thing needful" – uniting ourselves to Christ. We should daily renew the vows we gave to Christ when we were received into His holy Church and truly "born again."

To be "born again" may seem foolish in the eyes of the world, but Jesus doesn't think so. Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicode'mus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:3-5).

In the Eastern Christian understanding, "water and the Spirit" correspond to our individual Baptism and Chrismation. Through the descending into the font, the candidate has been united to Christ in a death like His. (Romans 6:3) To strengthen the newly-illumined servant of God, the Sacrament of the Holy Spirit *(Chrismation)* follows. Then the Church immediately gives the person the life-giving Food of Christ's Body and Blood for the journey ahead. The Godparents, priest and other spiritual guides will act as mentors to assist this precious soul in the things pertaining to a healthy relationship with God for many years to come.

The enemy is now desperately looking for any crack in these defenses. Because the devil can detect our points of weakness, he knows the strength and protection we get from the Holy Sacraments. He tries to discourage us from receiving these Fountains of Grace and will offer us all kinds of excuses.

Raymond J. Mastroberte
Iconographer

CALENDARS

Calendars are relative things. There's no universal reason that this year, for example, is 2008. For the Chinese, it's 5769. For Jews, it's 5769. For Muslims, whose calendar is based on the cycles of the moon, the year 2000 was 1420 A.H.

Our current way of keeping track of years comes from the Romans who got it from the Egyptians. When Julius Caesar pilfered the Egyptian way of calculating years, he added 90 days to the year 46 B.C. On the advice of the Astronomer Sosigenes in order that the calendar might better conform to the changing seasons.

The Julian calendar was subsequently modified in 1582 by Pope Gregory, who supressed 10 days because by that time spring was arriving on March 11 instead of March 21, the date that had been set in the fourth century.

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Fear no evil but sin, no being but Almighty God.

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*DiFlorio Family in memory of Father Peter and Matushka Josephine Felenchak and James DiFlorio, Sr.

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VIGIL LIGHTS

by Saint Nicholai (Velimirovich)

Vigil lamps are lighted before icons:

First – because our faith is light. Christ said "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). The light of the vigil lamp reminds us of that light by which Christ illumines our souls.

Second – in order to remind us of the radiant character of the saint before whose icon we light the vigil lamp, for saints are called "sons of light" (John 12:26, Luke 16:8).

Third – in order to serve as a reproach to us for our dark deeds, for our evil thoughts and desires, and in order to call us to the path of evangelical light; and so that we would more zealously try to fulfill the commandments of the Savior: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works" (Matthew 5:16).

Fourth – so that the vigil lamp would be our small sacrifice to God, Who gave Himself completely as a sacrifice for us, and as a small sign of our great gratitude and radiant love for Him from Whom we ask in prayer for life, and health, and salvation, and everything that only boundless heavenly love can bestow.

Fifth – so that terror would strike The evil powers that sometimes assail us even at the time of prayer and lead away our thoughts from the Creator. the evil powers love the darkness and tremble at every light, especially at that which belongs to God and those who please Him.

Sixth – so that this light would rouse us to selflessness. Just as the oil and wick burn in the vigil lamp, submissive to our will, so let our souls also burn with the flame of love in all our sufferings, always being submissive to God's will.

Seventh – in order to teach us that just as a vigil lamp cannot be lit without our hand, so too, our heart, our inward vigil lamp, cannot be lit without the holy fire of God's grace, even if it were to be filled with all the virtues. All these virtues of ours, after all, [are only] like combustible material, but the fire which ignites them proceeds from God.

Eighth – in order to remind us that before anything else the Creator of the world created light, and after that everything else in order. "And God said, let there be light; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). And it must be so also at the beginning of our spiritual life, so that before anything else, the light of Christ's truth would shine within us. From this light of Christ's truth subsequently every good deed is created, springs up in us and grows in us.

May the Light of Christ illumine you as well!

Undique (from everywhere)

The horror of the death of the innocents in Matthew 2:16 is not lessened by the fact that the mad Herod ordered the execution, reportedly on his death bed, of his son Antipater, who was far from a child and whose demise had no impact on Christianity.

At the beginning of the 1830's, the evergreen tree was still being referred to as a "fetching German notion." At the end of that decade, it had "become a custom" in homes of the St. Petersburg elite...Only in the homes of the clergy and in peasant huts did the evergreen tree fail to take root in the 19th century...

The tree... was not especially favored. It's association as a death-symbol and its link with "the underworld" according to Russian tradition, as well as the tradition of setting the tree on the roofs of taverns, contrasted with the changes in attitudes that occurred in the middle of the 19th century... process of the tree's used by Christians was not very smooth in Russia. It met opposition from the Orthodox Church. The clergy saw in the new celebration "demonic action", a pagan tradition which had nothing to do with the birth of the Savior, and furthermore it was a tradition from the West. Y.V. Dushechkina, Dr. of philological sciences at the St. Petersburg State University.

Peter the Great ordered special New Year's services held in all churches on January 1. Further, he instructed that festive evergreen branches be used to decorate the doorposts in interiors of houses, and he commanded that all citizens of Moscow should display their happiness by loudly congratulating one another on the New Year.

Everywhere Orthodoxy has gone it has "acculturated" itself to reflect the life of its faithful in that country or region. This "acculturation" has been both the strength of Orthodoxy and its weakness in America.

The first people to fall from grace were converts to Christianity who insisted on following certain aspects of the traditional Mosaic Law. In Galatians 5:2-4 it was St. Paul's intent

to show people that Christians were bound to God by faith, not rituals – in this case, circumcision. He wrote: "I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole law."

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace."

Since the time of the New Testament, Christians have believed that when worshipping God, we who are earthbound enter by the spirit into "heavenly places." In Orthodox worship, we can step out of the pandemonium of time into the peace of eternity. Therefore, everything in our worship has heaven as its point of reference. But this heavenly focus by no means turns worship into a mental religion. A human being is not merely soul or spirit. Being human involves the unity of soul and body. Accordingly, worship calls for the action not only of the mind, the emotion and the will, but also of the body with all its senses. So, as the Scriptures describe, in worship there are things to see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. Our whole being is to participate actively in worship and that is what we do in the Orthodox church.

Quantity and quality are two different categories. It would be naive to assume that the more holy images in an Orthodox house, the more pious his life. A disorganized collection of icons, prints, religious wall calendars covering a significant amount of living space, can often have a directly opposite effect on a person's spiritual life. A collection of icons can turn into simple, meaningless collecting, something in which the prayerful purpose of the icon has no role whatsoever.

We may wonder why the priest or deacon censes the congregation as well as the icons. The best icon of Christ God is men and women who are made in His image. This is why the Orthodox priest or deacon during the liturgy turns and censes the living icons of God in the congregation (the worshippers) after having censed the icons on the icon screen/ikonostas and walls.

The traditional icon used by the Church on Easter is an icon of Holy Saturday: the Descent of Christ into Hades. It gives a theological picture as it depicts Christ, radiant, standing on the shattered gates of Hades. With His outstretched arms, He is joining hands with Adam and all the other Old Testament righteous whom He has seen there. He leads them from the kingdom of death.

Every Sunday when we listen to the Hours chanted in Church, we hear the words: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." (Ps 51:7). What is hyssop? It is uncertain which plant is identified as hyssop. We know that it must have had a long stalk, for it was used to raise the sponge to Jesus' lips as He hung on the Cross. We know that branches of it were tied together and used to sprinkle lepers to cleanse them, and it was generally used to purge (get rid of) guilt or some type of moral or ceremonial defilement.

Maybe the most difficult thing about humility is to accept humbly the non-love of others for us. Surely, we are justified in longing for this love, but we cannot demand it, even within our heart. For the commandment we have received is that we love others, not that we demand their love for us. The very essence of love is that we demand nothing for ourselves. Only when we achieve this non-demanding attitude does the golden bird of God's love come down into our heart and fill it.

(Sergei Fugel)

The difference between disciples and apostles is told in Matt 10:1-2. Jesus originally called disciples. The meaning of the word disciple is a "follower." Hence, these people followed Jesus and learned from Him. Then Jesus chose out of all of His disciples (more than twelve) certain ones who were to be apostles. The word apostle means "sent one." In Acts 1:16-26, Peter said the criteria for being an apostle is that he must have followed Jesus Christ in His earthly ministry and been a witness of the Resurrection.



Many of us are familiar with Rum Babas, those towering desserts that go so well with a hot cup of tea, but we are not so familiar with Babkas, those hardy baked dishes so common in the Eastern European cooking. I remember them from my childhood made of grated potatoes, sauteed onions and if it were not a fast day plenty of bacon bits (squarky). I received a recipe from an old friend recently for a Carpathian Babka. As you can see, it is a more delicate babka than most. It is made with mashed potatoes rather than fresh grated ones.

I'm also giving you an easy to make, delicious unbaked cookie that chocoholics find irresistible. It's quick and easy to make.

CARPATHIAN BABKA

3 potatoes (1 lb.)
1 cup cream-style cottage cheese
2 tbls. butter
2 eggs, separated
1/2 tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. pepper

Peel and halve potatoes. Cook in boiling, salted water in a covered pot until tender. About 20 min. Drain. Mash, adding cottage cheese and butter. Then add egg yolks, salt and pepper. Taste, adding more if needed. Beat egg whites until stiff. Fold into potato mixture. Spoon into well greased 1 quart casserole or souffle dish. Bake at 375 degrees until puffed and golden, about 30 to 35 minutes. Serve immediately.

OREO DROPS

1 package (18 oz.) Oreo sandwich cookies
8 ounces cream cheese
1 (12 oz.) bag semi-sweet chocolate chips
2 tsps. shortening

Crush cookies to fine crumbs and mix with softened cream cheese. Form dough into 40 balls, place on waxed paper on a cookie sheet. Freeze at least one hour. Melt semi-sweet chocolate chips and shortening. Dip balls to coat, set on waxed paper until coating hardens.

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Editor's Notes



In August of 2007, I started to discuss the necessity of computerizing The Orthodox Herald and taking a pause to straighten files, etc. As my brother, Fr. John Bohush put it-it's about time that I enter the 21st century and use some of the technology which is now available. How best to do this? Some suggested that I put out a double issue in 2008, others, that I go to a quarterly. As I pondered these options, several months went by. Then circumstances gave me breathing space to fully examine the situation. I have decided not to publish the paper for a few months and get it and me into the 21st century. Subscriptions will be extended so that everyone will get the right number of copies. I will send out Packet Plan bills later to cover the copies published in 2008. Those who have paid in advance shall be credited.

I have been gratified to learn that "The Herald" has become a part of so many lives. Those who I have informed of my decision say: "take a few months, up to three but no longer. I need the paper."

So here's a "DOSFEDANIYA" for a few months and then hopefully a return to a better, more informative paper!

Matushka Nina

Home Bible Reading Schedule

JANUARY 2008

1. Colossians 2:8-12
2. James 3:11-4:6
3. James 4:7-5:9
4. 1 Peter 1:1-2, 10-12
5. 1 Corinthians 9:19-27
6. **Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7**
7. Acts 19:1-8
8. 2 Timothy 3:16-4:4
9. 2 Timothy 4:9-22
10. Titus 1:5-2:1
11. Titus 1:15-2:1
12. Ephesians 5:10-17
13. **Ephesians 4:7-13**
14. Hebrews 2:26-8:2
15. Hebrews 4:1-13
16. Hebrews 5:11-6:7
17. Hebrews 13:17-21
18. Hebrews 13:7-16
19. Ephesians 2:11-13
20. **2 Corinthians 4:6-15**
21. Hebrews 8:7-13
22. Hebrews 9:5-10, 15-23
23. Hebrews 10:1-18
24. Hebrews 10:35-11:7
25. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11
26. Ephesians 5:1-8
27. **Hebrews 7:26-28, 8:1-2**
28. Hebrews 11:17-23, 27-31
29. Hebrews 12:20-28, 13:22-25
30. Hebrews 13:7-16
31. James 1:19-27

Rimour: after readings

BIBLE STUDY

In Ephesians 4:7-13 on January 13, we read that each of us are individuals with different abilities, talents, and gifts. Each of these were given to us by God. This teaches us to be diligent in using these gifts, being humble in ascribing them to God and not feeling that they are of our own effort or doing. To prove that Christ is the giver of these spiritual gifts, St. Paul quotes from the Messianic 68th Psalm (verse 18): "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men."

What a strange phrase. What is meant by "captivity captive?" It means subdued and captive enemies – Satan and his angels and death.

The reading deviates somewhat before it again takes up the matter of the gifts. In verses 11-13, he writes of these gifts for the organization and governance of the Church. In fact, St. Paul seems to have combined all the functions mentioned in his own ministry.

The verses 8-10, speak much of the ascending and descending of Christ. Jesus descended. He who was God took on human flesh and descended not only to earth, but to Hades.

He ascended, first from the dead, then from Hades, then from the earth giving us eternal life.

PASCHA/EASTER

When is Easter? How many weeks apart are the two Easters?

The Pascha Cycle for 2008 follows. Mark your appointment calendars.

GREAT LENT BEGINS	March 10
PASCHA/EASTER	April 27
ASCENSION	June 5
PENTECOST	June 15
WESTERN EASTER	March 23

A LIGHTER MOMENT

In the middle of the night, two safecrackers entered a bank. While one waited impatiently, the other took off his shoes and started to turn the dial with his toes.

"What's the delay? Let's open this ting, grab the loot and run!"

"Hold your horses. This'll only take a minute and it's sure to drive the fingerprint experts crazy."